

# Study Methodology for a New Muslim

**Description:** To learn to study in a systematic way and some other points of benefit.

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Published on 27 Aug 2012 - Last modified on 22 Mar 2018

Category: Lessons > [Islamic Lifestyle, Morals and Practices](#) > [General Morals and Practices](#)

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## Objective

- To understand the importance of studying in a systematic way and focusing on what is more important.
- To learn to take knowledge 'step by step' and not overwhelming oneself with it.
- To understand the importance of applying what one learns to the best of one's ability.
- To understand why not to get into long discussions and arguments with fellow Muslims.
- To learn about being humble in seeking knowledge.

## Arabic Terms

- *Hadith* - (plural " *ahadith* ") is a piece of information or a story. In Islam it is a narrative record of the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad and his companions.
- *Salah* - the Arabic word to denote a direct connection between the believer and Allah. More specifically, in Islam it refers to the formal five daily prayers and is the most important form of worship.
- *Sahabah* - the plural form of "Sahabi," which translates to Companions. A *sahabi*, as the word is commonly used today, is someone who saw Prophet Muhammad, believed in him and died as a Muslim.
- *Ramadan* - The ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. It is the month in which the obligatory fasting has been prescribed.
- *Zakah* - obligatory charity.
- *Ghusl* " ritual bath.
- *Shahadah* - Testimony of Faith.

The lesson you are about to read and absorb is based on years of thought and experience. Therefore, take it seriously. First, learning is not essential to following most other religions, but accepting Islam is a commitment to life-long learning. Becoming a Muslim is as easy as reciting the *Shahadah* (or the Testimony of Faith), but living Islam requires that each and every person seek knowledge about their new religion. Once a person has accepted Islam he or she then becomes obligated to learn how to worship Allah in a way that pleases Him. To grow as a Muslim, one continues to learn throughout one's life. From the many thousands of authentic *ahadith* we have access to, we find that Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, vigorously pointed out the importance of seeking knowledge.



oeSeeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.”[\[1\]](#)

Two, all education is done systematically, in steps, following a methodology. Take public school education as an example. Essential subjects like math and science are taught in small increments and repeated over the years until the student is ready for college.

The following are some important steps to follow in your journey to Islamic knowledge and growth as a Muslim:

**1. Focus on the Essentials.** As a new Muslim, the greatest focus should be on learning the Islamic belief system combined with prayer. The Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad over a period of 23 years and he taught the *Sahabah* about Allah the Almighty for 13 years before he began to introduce a system of rules that brought about the Islamic nation. Knowledge of Allah and belief in Him constitutes the very foundation of Islam. Learning to pray and making it a habit will take some time and you should never lose that focus. Therefore, concentrate the most on the following:

- Learn more on the Islamic beliefs and what contradicts them.
- Learn the *salah* prayer in Arabic.
- Learn the translation of the Arabic portions.
- Memorize short chapters of the Quran to recite in the *salah*.
- Make a routine of praying *salah* regularly on time no matter where you are.
- Appreciate the spirituality of *salah* so it becomes a source of comfort for you.
- Fast *Ramadan*.
- Give *zakah* and charity.

**2. Don't Get Overwhelmed.** Many new Muslims go through a period of intense excitement and energy after accepting Islam, but since there is so much to learn, they quickly get overwhelmed. You can learn about Muslim history, sects, *ahadith*, Quran and its

explanation, Arabic language, Muslim culture and people, life of the Prophet Muhammad and chronicles of early Muslims, Islamic ethics and theology, to name a few. There are numerous videos, audios, websites and books, good and bad, short and lengthy, translations and original works that it is nearly impossible to keep up with everything on Islam in the English language. Therefore, you have to follow a carefully planned methodology, be *selective* about what you read and listen to, and in general, be smart about how you learn about this wonderful faith.

Remember *oeslow and steady wins the race*". You are not in a competition, so don't get carried away. Although you need to readjust your priorities after becoming a Muslim, you cannot get overwhelmed and burnt-out.

**3. Apply What You Learn.** The purpose of Islamic learning is rarely to collect information. Learn what will benefit you to become a better person, a better Muslim, a better parent, and a better child. Learn what *you* can apply. Learn what will soften your heart. Learn what will bring you closer to Allah. Learn the basics of ablution, *ghusl*, *salah*, fasting, *zakah*, and other essential duties of a Muslim. This is not to say that you should not learn about history or other topics you might enjoy, but weigh the importance of a subject with how much of it can you apply. Attending lectures, reading books, and adopting different cultural practices will not do you much good if you are weak in faith, rarely pray, struggle with fasting, and do not avoid major prohibitions like drugs, alcohol, and gambling. Your manners should improve with more learning.

**4. Avoid Argumentation.** Muslims come from many different backgrounds, they practice Islam differently, hold divergent views, and have different priorities. There are some topics they tend to debate about a lot either online or in the mosques, like how to determine the beginning and end of *Ramadan*, details of prayer, meat available in the grocery stores, role and place of women, political participation, and others. Avoid argumentation. Period. It hardens the heart, does not make you a better person, spreads hatred, and divides Muslims.

**5. Stay Humble.** Humility is an essential quality of a Muslim. One aspect of humility is to not look down at other people, thinking them to be less than you. The Prophet said: *oeNo one in whose heart is an ant's weight of arrogance shall enter Paradise."* The companions inquired as to what arrogance was, and the Prophet said: *oeArrogance is rejecting the truth and thinking yourself better than others."*

Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, a man of great wisdom, a close companion of our Prophet Muhammad, and the first caliph, stated, *oeLet not any Muslim belittle another Muslim, for the lowest of the Muslims is great in the Sight of Allah."* It often happens that a new Muslim acquires a lot of knowledge in a short amount of time and starts looking down at those who were born as Muslims, have little knowledge, or are weak and sinful Muslims. You need to stay humble and watch yourself feeling superior to others at all times! Your humility should show in how you deal with others, especially with those who you might feel do not treat you in the best possible way.

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Endnotes:

[1] *At-Tirmidhi*

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